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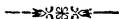
SENATORS AND REPRESENTATIVES

OF THE

FREE STATES,

IN THE

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES.



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1838.

TO THE  
SENATORS AND REPRESENTATIVES OF THE FREE  
STATES IN THE CONGRESS OF THE U. STATES.

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As human beings interested in the cause of universal humanity—as mothers, wives, daughters, and sisters, having a deep stake in the prosperity and honor of our country, we respectfully appeal to you, the appointed guardians of its interests and laws. We make no apology for this proceeding, for we believe that “the truth of heaven was never committed to a tongue, however feeble, but it gave a right to that tongue to announce mercy, while it declared judgment.”

Various resolutions and proceedings of Congress seem to indicate a belief, that the anti-slavery feeling roused in the United States, is but a fanatical and temporary excitement; and this doctrine has generally been impressed upon the representatives of the South, that they too might be “given over to a strong delusion, and made to believe a lie.”

Be no longer deceived in this matter. As mothers training the consciences of youth, we are wielding a power stronger than political parties; and it will not be the fault of women engaged in this sacred cause, if apologies for slavery do not cease with the present generation.

Six years ago, there was but one Anti-Slavery Society, consisting of twelve members. Associations in the free states now number more than two hundred and fifty thousand members, and new societies are being formed with unexampled rapidity. Then there are very large numbers, who do not wholly sympathize with the abolitionists, but are driven to act with them in some degree, because their principles and movements have become identified with the sacred right of free discussion. Moreover, priest and politician, merchant and lawyer, legislator and voter, in a word, the entire mass of the community, have been unconsciously moved onward by this powerful engine, even when they were crying out most loudly to stop its progress.

The spirit of determined hostility to slavery is one of those divine impulses, with which God sometimes stirs the hearts of nations, and thus regenerates a world lying in wickedness.

This is no transient excitement. It is a deep, solemn, and religious feeling. It is the stern voice of duty, speaking to the sons of Puritans, and the followers of Penn. Through the din of mobs and the clamor of self-interest, they have been listening to it reverently. It has roused their consciences. It is melting their hearts, as with a holy fire caught from the altar of Jehovah.

For your own sakes, wrestle not with this mighty spirit, neither trifle with it; for in the end it will prove too strong for you.

It is difficult for minds accustomed to political subtlety, to understand whence the abolitionists derive their rapidly increasing power; for no man can so effectually puzzle the sagacity of the worldly-wise, and disappoint their calculations, as the honest truth-

teller, who conceals no opinion, and compromises no principle.

This earnestness of sincere belief, zealously expressed by "the foolishness of preaching," enabled twelve poor fishermen to change the religious faith, laws, and customs, of a large portion of the globe; and thus God always strengthens the hands of those who, in simple faith, seek to perform His missions.

If you cannot believe in the omnipotence of truth, when received into honest hearts, and uttered by sincere lips, then search into the matter, and see whether there are not abundant *reasons* why the anti-slavery cause must prevail.

The opponents of immediate emancipation, (except in a very few cases of reckless desperation,) dare not vindicate, in the face of the civilized world, the monstrous system which they are endeavoring to uphold; hence, they come to the conflict with a fatal paralysis of moral strength. On the other hand, the abolitionists are fettered with no necessity of concealment or evasion. Their cause is founded deep in the principles of our religion, in the republican institutions of our country, in the concurrent sentiment of the civilized world, and in the democratic spirit of the age.

Let the utmost wisdom and profoundest logic be employed, to assimilate slavery with the precepts and example of the lowly Nazarene, or to reconcile this foul anomaly with our fair pretensions of freedom, as expressed in the Declaration of Independence, and the Bills of Rights in various states. Suppose the task performed with a mind undisturbed by the anticipated hiss of all coming time, and what will be the result? The creed of a narrow, selfish, and suicidal expediency, instead of wisdom—a miserable cobweb of sophistry, instead of the storm-sail of truth; for such

must ever be the fate of the proudest intellectual man, when he violates the sacredness of his own inward convictions.

A cause based on the common sense of mankind, on the common instincts of humanity, on the common religious faith, on the rules of natural law, on the spirit and letter of our free institutions, cannot be overthrown by political intrigues, or the fury of mobs. Let statesmen beware how they seek to do it; and let them not think to find dignity or safety on *neutral* ground, while omnipotent Truth is doing battle with a mighty falsehood, strengthened by long continuance, and rendered arrogant by the base worship of timeservers!

Senators and Representatives of a free people, we appeal to your own consciences, whether the rights and true dignity of the North have been properly represented.

How was Missouri brought into the Union, to give new vigor to the internal slave-trade, and augment the slaveholding power in our national councils? Two votes decided it—and those two came from Massachusetts. How many sundered families, darkened souls, and despairing hearts, have those men to answer for at the bar of judgment!

How was Arkansas admitted with perpetual slavery for her Bill of Rights? By the guilty passiveness of *Northern members* of Congress.

Had it not been for the same passiveness, would Texian independence have been so hastily acknowledged? When it was stated in the British Parliament, that our Secretary of State was involved in Texas land speculations, who even instituted inquiry into the fact?

When the rights of every citizen were invaded by breaking open the United States' mail, who demanded

that the offenders should be brought to justice? Who asked for the dismissal of the postmaster that sanctioned the violent deed? Instead of rebuke, the Senate gave sign of approbation, by subsequently ratifying his appointment!

When Mr. Preston, on the floor of Congress, denounced death upon any citizen that dared to visit South Carolina, without approving her "peculiar domestic institution," who answered his furious storm of bravado as a Christian might—as a freeman should? Not one.

When the health and peace of the innocent Dr. Crandall was sacrificed in prison, at the seat of our national government, for merely believing that *all* men had a natural right to liberty, was the voice of virtuous indignation heard in the halls of Congress? No! there was the silence of dead freedom deep buried in her grave.

Was it the dark and turbulent spirit of slavery that over-awed the independence of the North? There is retributive justice in the fact, that they who would assist in keeping other men slaves must *themselves* be slaves.

Well might the South be emboldened by such repeated proofs of timid subserviency in Northern men. When John Quincy Adams attempted to pay a passing tribute to the memory of the murdered Lovejoy, no wonder they dared to drown his voice with lawless and tumultuous cries. It is no marvel that they commanded us to give up freedom of discussion and the right of petition, and expected *you* to bind them on the altar of slavery. And the House of Representatives did accommodate them with a gag-law; though, to their credit be it spoken, the spirit of our free fathers shone forth in a firm minority. The Senate,

less bold in wrong, passed no such odious resolution; but they timidly contrive to suppress by indirection every petition on the subject of slavery.

The people understand this, and lay it up in memory. The South has unconsciously arrayed herself against a spirit, more uncompromising than the consciences of statesmen. Northern citizens are roused to the conviction, that their own rights are closely involved with those of the slave, and they will not be threatened into a surrender of those rights.

We rejoice and are thankful that in one man among you lives pre-eminently the spirit of '76—one Quintus Curtius ready to spring into the yawning gulf, so Rome might be saved. Brave and venerable man! In the history of these dark and shameful times, thou hast caused one page to shine with the immortal rays of truth and freedom. God's suffering poor, for whom thou hast defended the right of prayer on earth, will pray for thee in Heaven. The friends of freedom throughout the world will do thee reverence. Thy sun is brightest at its setting; for amid thick clouds it shines with the radiance of righteous liberty, and the glorious light will gleam far on the unseen future.

Not without regret, respected son of New England, are we constrained to say that on this matter even thou hast not yet done thy whole duty. Eloquently and courageously hast thou defended the rights of thy free constituents; nay more, humanely and bravely hast thou pleaded for the slave's right to petition; but even thou hast not yet urged the immediate emancipation of slaves in the District of Columbia. Surely thy clear intellect cannot long be clouded by the unconscious habit of considering *men as chattels personal!* If it be so, even for a moment, let it take lessons of thy heart;—*that* will teach thee that thy

own noble spirit could not, by any circumstances, be made an article of property; and that the eternal reasons for thy freedom equally vindicate the freedom of every human being. Thy Bible will teach thee that slaveholder and slave are *both* thy brothers; both children of the same Father, heirs of the same privileges, travelling to the same home.

To Messrs. Slade, of the House, and Morris, of the Senate, we would give respectful thanks for the manly course they have pursued. They, too, will be remembered among the champions of freedom—even if they have not urged the subject with all the zeal and perseverance due to our brethren in bonds. Few men give their sympathies to the slave so freely, as to enable them to look on this important subject from the highest point of view. Battling for our *own rights* gives some degree of moral strength; but urging our duty to *others* renders us clear-sighted and invincible. Much of the yielding and compromising spirit exhibited in Congress, may be explained by the fact, that, as a nation, we are all blinded by artificial and man-devised distinctions. We do not habitually think of the slave as a *brother* in the human family. We regard him as *property*, not as a *man*, whose dearest and most sacred rights have been violated. Thus, when it is declared that Congress ought not to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia, until a majority of the inhabitants of that District are in favor of it, it is entirely forgotten that colored men, both bond and free, are inhabitants of that District.

The Legislature of Massachusetts, in 1837, passed a law, which, as appears by the report of the committee who drafted the bill, and by the terms of the act itself, was intended to secure trial by jury to fugitive



slaves; yet, when a Southern member of Congress, in 1838, accused certain of the free states of such a proceeding, both the senators from Massachusetts hastened to assure him that the state *they* represented had committed no such offence against the majesty of the South. This fact betrayed a surprising degree of ignorance, concerning the principles and acts of their constituents; and it likewise indicated minds darkened by "the wild and guilty phantasy that man can hold property in man." Had it been otherwise, would they, even by implication, admit that there was need of apology, for granting any *man* the right of trial by jury?

If you ask why women address you on the subject of slavery, we simply point to our own insulted petitions—to wives torn from their husbands—mothers dragged from their children—and women sold in the shambles, like the beasts that perish. We might allude to other wrongs of our own sex, and prove that woman is *peculiarly* degraded by this polluting system; but over this part of the subject we prefer to cast a veil.

All these wrongs are committed under legal sanction, in a District over which Congress has "exclusive legislation." We entreat you to remember that each one of you is a component and responsible part of this same Congress, so mighty for good or for evil. We would respectfully warn you, that the free states will not long tolerate the existence of slavery and the slave-trade in that District. If you will not utter the conscientious remonstrance of a free people, they will choose more courageous and far-sighted servants. In the reports of the Legislature of Massachusetts, Vermont, and other of the free states, you will perceive "coming events cast their shadows before." A moral

noon is so near at hand, that events quickly follow their shadows, and the wise will prepare to meet them.

As you hope to answer to God for the power placed in your hands—as you love the welfare and reputation of our common country—as you value your own fame, or wish for peaceful consciences in a dying hour, come up to this great work of justice and humanity, with the bold freedom of republicans, and the mild firmness of Christians.

In behalf of the Anti-Slavery Convention of American Women, assembled at Philadelphia,

MARY S. PARKER, *Pres't.*

ANNE W. WESTON,  
MARTHA V. BALL,  
JULIANA A. TAPPAN,  
SARAH LEWIS,

} *Secretaries.*